

THE MORNING SUN

"If It's Right We Are For It." Owned by the People of the State of Florida, Edited by CLAUDE L'ENGLE.

Volume 2
Number 20

TALLAHASSEE, FLA., TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1909.

Five Cents a Copy
50c for the session

A LITTLE DIVERSION IN THE HOUSE

Proceedings Out of the Ordinary in Which Mr. Speaker and Mr. Hilburn are Principals.

The proceedings of the House the past few days have all verged upon the sensational, at times being even somewhat yellow, but the height of this sensationalism was reached yesterday morning when the arrest of Hilburn by the Sergeant-at-arms was ordered.

The question under discussion was a motion by Mr. MacWilliams to reconsider the vote by which Senate Joint Resolution No. 18 was lost in the House Saturday.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 18 is Mr. Beard's resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution, relating to suffrage, or, as it has come to be known, the disfranchisement bill.

Saturday morning, after the very able and eloquent address of the gentleman from Mississippi, Senator Money, the vote was taken on the adoption of the resolution by the House, and it was lost because of the lack of the requisite three-fifths.

The reconsideration of this vote was the matter before the House yesterday morning, and several members spoke, both for and against it.

Leading the opposition was Mr. Hilburn of Putnam, who addressed the House at some length, declaring that if adopted by the people even, the resolution could never be carried into effect, because of the fact that it conflicts with the Federal Constitution, and he therefore considered it unwise for this Legislature to attempt to submit it to the people.

Mr. Stokes of Escambia took issue with the gentleman from Putnam and ably argued for submission.

Both Mr. Stokes and Mr. Hilburn had argued long and well for submission of the amendment providing for State prohibition, and Mr. Stokes now took the position that the people should be allowed to express their wishes in regard to the amendment under discussion as well as the prohibition amendment.

Mr. Hilburn, as well as Mr. Stokes, was several times interrupted in the course of his argument, by question and answer.

At one point in the proceedings some expressions of Mr. Hilburn were characterized by Mr. MacWilliams as unparliamentary and unbecoming a gentleman.

Mr. MacWilliams, in the course of his remarks, stated that he was glad to be placed among that class of men who sometimes change their minds.

"You mean you belong to the wise ones?" asked the gentleman from Putnam.

"I mean," replied the gentleman from St. Johns, "that I do NOT belong to that class who never change."

"It's because of classification that I'm surprised to see you change," retorted Mr. Hilburn, and these were the words declared to be unparliamentary and the rest.

This colloquy ended, the vote was taken on the motion to reconsider, and it was found that the motion prevailed.

Mr. MacWilliams then moved that further discussion of the matter be postponed to Wednesday a week, in order that the members who are now away on committee duty might be present and have the opportunity to vote.

The motion was also opposed by Mr. Hilburn: "I moved to lay that motion on the table," he said.

The Speaker disclaimed any knowledge of such motion, but the gentleman insisted. In different parts of the House members asked to be recognized upon points of order, and called out that no such motion had been made.

"I did make it," insisted Mr. Hilburn.

"The chair rules you out of order, Mr. Hilburn," announced the Speaker, and again, "The gentleman is out of order—the gentleman will take his seat."

"I won't take my seat," loudly declared the now angry member from Putnam.

"The sergeant-at-arms will arrest the gentleman," called

COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE RULES

As a Sequel to the Speaker-Hilburn Diversion of the Morning Session of the House.

The sensation in the House yesterday morning; being the arrest of Mr. Hilburn by the sergeant-at-arms upon the order of the speaker, had a sequel in the afternoon in the introduction of a resolution by Mr. Davis of Madison, to the effect that a committee of three be appointed to investigate the rights and powers of the Speaker with reference to ordering the arrest of members.

Mr. Davis said his sense of justice was utterly shocked when he heard the order for the arrest of a member of the House, and upon query and investigation he had been unable to find any authority for such action by the Speaker of the House.

Mr. Stokes, quoting rule two of the rules and regulations of the House, moved to lay the resolution on the table.

Argument and debate followed, Mr. Davis insisting that the Speaker had no authority to order arrests and that the matter should be settled for the future guidance of this and following sessions of the Legislature.

The vote upon the motion to lay on the table was 18 to 21 against the motion, and the resolution was immediately taken up for further discussion.

Mr. Alexander spoke against its adoption, saying that Mr. Hilburn himself would admit that in the occurrence of the morning, which had no doubt provoked this resolution from the gentleman from Madison, he was wrong and the Speaker right, and there was no necessity for such investigation.

Mr. Hilburn disclaimed any connection with the resolution, and said he did not see why either himself or the Speaker should be brought into the matter; that the resolution could be adopted and the investigation made, without connecting either of them with it.

The Speaker here called Mr. MacWilliams to the chair and took a seat upon the floor of the House. He stated, later in the discussion, that he had taken this course in order that the duty of appointing the committee called for in the resolution might be discharged by some one else.

The House then, on motion of Mr. Calkins, amended the resolution to relieve the Speaker of the duty of appointing the committee, and Mr. MacWilliams, as the then presiding officer, appointed upon the investigating committee Mr. Davis, Mr. Calkins, and Mr. Knowles.

It seems that the fashion of "investigation" is to be a most popular one with the present House, and probably it was thought that the Speaker would consider himself slighted if omitted from the list of "those investigated."

The complaint that there is nothing interesting about the sessions of either house has not been heard in several days, and the interest now promises to continue unabated to the end.

the Speaker.

A silence that could be felt fell upon the House.

Everybody seemed to be wondering if it was real, or if he had been suddenly transported to the realm of comic opera.

"The sergeant-at-arms will arrest the gentleman," called the Speaker again, and everyone realized that it was the real thing and not a joke or a dream.

Mr. Hilburn was still on his feet and making efforts to speak.

From both sides of the room came cries of "Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker! The gentleman is in contempt and cannot be heard; he cannot be heard until he purges himself of contempt."

There was a moment's silence after the tumult, and the last words of Mr. Hilburn's apology could be heard, though the first had been lost in the noise.

"The gentleman has receded from his position," presently announced the Speaker, and the House resumed its normal

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VOLUSIA

Have Their Troubles Aired in the House. Each Man Thinks He is Right—Which is Not at all Uncommon.

The House received its regular shock and surprise when Mr. Alexander rose to a point of personal privilege saying that he had never addressed the House upon such a point and that he would not do so now were it not that a member of this house, his colleague, had written a letter to one of the papers of Volusia County, the purpose of which (Mr. Alexander said), was to hurt him at home. The letter was in part as follows:

"As a matter of fact his bill along this line (a free bridge for Daytona to be built by the State) has never been up for consideration before the House or given any serious thought by anyone so far as I know. No doubt Mr. Alexander would be very glad to throw the responsibility of its defeat on me. This is very apparent and would be an exceedingly damaging political trick if the people of Volusia County were not a thinking people.

"But there is one thing I did not object to. This bill came from the Committee on Appropriations with an unfavorable report. At the request of Mr. Alexander the bill was recommitted. It came to me that he was using this line of argument with the members of the Committee: 'I simply want this bill to pass the House to give me a boost in Volusia County; I have already made arrangements to have it killed in the Senate.' Just think of that! Now if anyone is of the opinion that I am going to violate my oath of office to boost him or any one else in Volusia County or any other County he is much mistaken."

When he had finished his remarks, which included the reading of the above quoted letter by the clerk, Mr. Thornton took the floor and read a letter signed by Mr. Hardee from St. Lucie which stated that Alexander had said he only wanted the bill passed and recommitment that HE might be "boosted" in Volusia, and that he had secured (he thought) enough votes in the Senate to kill the bill.

"Jim Alex" looked as though he was going to put it to both of these gentlemen and had risen to his feet, when Mr. Light cut him off by a motion to resume the regular order, which was carried.

Mr. Alexander declared that he would answer these gentlemen in the press of the State, after which Mr. Cox of Polk put in a resolution (which, by the way, was ruled out of order), requesting these gentlemen from Volusia to "bury the hatchet," and so the matter stands.

quiet.

"I move," said Mr. Stringer of Hernando, "that all mention of this occurrence be omitted from the records of this House," and every member voted aye.

Then Mr. Cox of Polk moved that the members of the press then present be requested not to make mention of the occurrence in their reports of the day's proceedings. A member of the press who was in the audience said, "They can expunge it from their own records as fast as they like, but its on my records in indelible ink, and I just can't get it out."

The occurrence has been the sole topic of conversation ever since its happening. It is said that Speaker Farris is usually right in his rulings, but this ruling was not only right, it was remarkably quick and the exact action that should have been taken.

It was an excellent bit of parliamentary work, and the rapidity with which he ruled made it the more subject for remark.

So far as this Legislature is concerned, the Walles claim is settled, by defeat of the proposition for a commission to effect a settlement with Mr. Walles. This leaves the matter where it has stood for the past four years.